

PAUL CHARTRAND
Victoria, BC
Tel: (250) 472-7431
Fax: (250) 472-8956

Feb
• Publications
- Speeches (gen)

NOTES FOR A SPEECH AT THE CALGARY REGIONAL HEALTH
AUTHORITY CONFERENCE MONDAY OCTOBER 19, 1998

Sheraton Cavalier Hotel

Calgary, Alberta.

10:30 A.M.

“The RCAP Approach to Health Issues”

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

ALLEY
EAT?

- Elders
- Poteau
- Calgary Grants

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

THANK

Linda Selsh
Martha Semer
Conf. organizers
Goal Job...
* try to
leave a
copy of
speech

RCAP:

Origins of the RCAP,, background

Chief Justice consultations, special representative HE DIED

YESTERDAY MOMENT OF SILENCE AND COMMENTS?

Mandate: very broad, 16 points including social issues, health

'Social issues, including poverty, ill health, substandard housing, and family violence'

. and I note that the objectives of this Conference fall squarely within the approach recommended by RCAP...that is not to say they are good only because of that fact.... but it is gratifying to see that we did not have it entirely wrong.

Membership; decided on representative basis re Ab. Peoples in Constitution, notably Indian or First Nations and those not 'status'; Metis and Inuit.

Etc..

Research

policy advisors, incl health and I deferred to their advice, not my field Cty consultations... we all learned a lot, and saw a lot

old women treaty 9 .. difficulties to get access to very basic medical care because of who they are, and that is what must be understood by

Canadians; there is no theory of justice or concept of public morality or principle of democracy that would justify this kind of condemnable situation...

- the law has been the tool of oppression and cultural genocide for indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere

- in Canada the Indian Act began, with the encroachment of Canadians into the West, to prohibit social institutions of indigenous peoples, such as marriage, prohibit more than one wife; and also traditional medical practices....some of these remained in place until the 1950s...

- the law has been used this way in other areas as well, and in other places too. Example of the Young case in Queensland in the late 1960s.

- but always there are those not being 'Ab. Themselves who see the injustice and cry out for it, or just roll up their sleeves and help. Many here I suspect...

- it was the concern of RCAP to see if the law could be used to do good instead and so it developed the legal concepts of a nation-to-nation relationship about which I will be commenting later today...

- I will talk generally about the RCAP approach to Health since a layman, and comment on the broader context of those recommendations, and comment on some aspects with which I am familiar....

- overall principle of participation

- nation-to-nation relationship

-sustained policy commitment for 20 years

PART TWO. RCAP APPROACH TO HEALTH

Part One of Final Report reviews a history of a relationship gone wrong, as illustrated by the Treaty 9 women. Build a new relationship.

Reviewed aspects of bad policies, including a chapter on Indian Residential School system and aspects of the Indian Act...

Part Two set out the legal and other mechanisms for the new relationship; the international and domestic rights of autonomy, including the treaties, an equitable redistribution of lands and resources, and new policies to build communities and nations and reach self-sufficiency.

Part Three is contained in a volume called 'Gathering Strength' (also the name of the government's narrow response this year.) It deals with the people, the foundation of not only legitimate political authority but also of hopes and aspirations for building communities and nations in which individual and group visions of happiness have a chance to develop....

In dealing with the people, it focuses first on the family and then upon health and social issues together in Chapter 3, in order to reflect the

holistic approach recommended widely in hearings. The health of the body, mind and spirit must be understood together, not as separate parts.

The core of the strategy proposed by RCAP in chapter 3 on Health and Healing is the following;

. reorganization of health and social services under Aboriginal control;

. a human resources strategy to prepare Aboriginal people to design and staff services;

. reform of mainstream institutions to make them more responsive to Aboriginal people, and;

. urgent action to achieve minimum standards of safe housing, water supply and waste disposal.

In the RCAP approach, current social problems are viewed as part of the legacy of historical displacement of indigenous peoples, people who have been at times forced to become exiles in their own homelands or to survive on small holdings within their vast traditional territories. The Aboriginal peoples in Canada are like nobody else; they are the only ones that have been dispossessed of their homes.

Dispossession of people, families, and communities is a moral evil condemned by international norms and laws. It leads to disastrous personal and community circumstances, including the phenomenon of violence turned inwards. I first learned about this phenomenon in

Australia, in relation to the case of a young man who had killed his fiancée. I learned that people, all being human, will react in the same way to circumstances, and that violence generated by dispossession was a feature of all societies in similar circumstances, regardless what country come from, or indigenous or not. See Paul Wilson, *Black Death, White Hands, Unwin* .

The RCAP approach views the shift to self-government as happening more quickly in some places than others, and important social effects often need a long time to develop, hence our twenty year plan requiring the investment of some billions of dollars in the short run in order to save many more billions in the long run.

RCAP realized that regardless of the form Aboriginal self-government might take, many Aboriginal people will continue to participate in the broader Canadian society, often battling assimilationist policies and the taunts of racist cowards.

The substantive recommendations, then, have the following three objectives;

1. To address the urgent social concerns through institution building and programme development congruent with the emergence of self-government;
2. To pave the way for Aboriginal self-government by enhancing the capacity of Aboriginal citizens to engage in nation building, and;

3. To stimulate adaptation of mainstream institutions to provide services in a manner that recognizes and affirms Aboriginal identity, involves Aboriginal people in governance and decision-making, and assumes a complementary and supportive role in the development of Aboriginal service institutions.

RCAP held hearings across Canada on its mandate. Here are the five recurring themes in what was said at those hearings, as published by RCAP;

1. Parity in medical and social service standards.

-recent INAC studies came as a surprise to some, but not Ab...

-show that the 3rd World conditions which George Manuel used in talking about a Fourth World still exist... RCAP had commented on this.

-Aboriginal people must share in the health and wealth of this country.

2. Focus on self-esteem

-one commentator faulted modern medicine for not recognizing the significance of self-esteem in good health.

.feel good about yourself... Need self confidence.... One memorable quote was how can I love others if I do not love myself? But that surely is conditioned in part by what others think about you, we can tell our children every day they are worthy and valuable, but....as I

read some years ago in McLeans a Cree father's lament: 'How can I teach my son to be proud of himself when you (Canada) are not proud of him.....

.. so health is seen as part of a broad relationship... and fabric of the country... USA African American writer said, our young people do not see themselves reflected in your public institutions, so what can they conclude about what the country believes about them??? Public symbols of values that we want to uphold,

3. *Recognition of traditional healing and culture*
4. *Holistic approaches to critical symptoms*
5. *Aboriginal and community control of programming.*

NATIONAL ROUND TABLE: VANCOUVER, MARCH 10-12, 1998

This brought together about 80 people from across the country who were actively involved in health development in Aboriginal communities to assist us in the development of our approach to Health and Healing.

RCAP has summarized the main concerns considered by these experts and they are reflected in the following themes;

1. Fourth World Health Conditions
2. Environmental context of health, e.g poverty, despair, housing, political alienation. Ab and non-Ab agreed that basic changes in political and economic conditions in community life are essential for long-term health development.

3. Aboriginal Cultural Foundations to Understanding Health.
4. Understanding Aboriginal people and communities and rights.
5. Political support of Health Concerns
6. Jurisdictional frustration and innovation.

This included the fragmentation of relevant services by government organization by department mandates, constitutional disputes over authority to pass laws and make policies, and spend money, and the inefficient and wasteful implications for delivery of services, both in cities and small places.

7. Practice before policy, or Just Do It.

Includes aspects of frustration with inertia of status quo, and ignore formal obstacles and go ahead with changes. Remember that RCAP says the same re jurisdiction in health as an aspect of aboriginal self-government.

- 8 Community Healing as a Fragile Process

Huge burden on the few who can help; one implication is being saddled very early on in a career with onerous responsibilities; and concern on how to assess the results of initiatives without compromising autonomy and integrity of the actors and at the same time making available the benefits of strengths and weaknesses for others.

9. Recognition of Special Needs and Priorities

The circumstances of some groups require specific attention and policies, e.g

- .victims of the residential school system;
- . people with disabilities;
- .victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse;
- . those who suffer from AIDS;
- .children with fetal alcohol syndrome.

As you may know, the federal government's response to RCAP last January focused on one of these specific concerns, that is, the victims of the residential school system. I have been asked to comment briefly on developments in this area, given my role as a Director and Secretary of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation..

PART THREE ABORIGINAL HEALING FOUNDATION

- the federal response of January 7, 1998

- an apology for the wrong things done **to and for** Aboriginal people.

- says will enter into a partnership to do **with** Aboriginal people...well that is consistent with the principle of participation, but unfortunately, did not engage in discussions with future partners it claimed to be interested when it developed its partnership policy.... a stumbling start noted by some Aboriginal leaders at the formal announcement;

- the response was assessed in part on the idea of reconciliation...which is not an easy topic.... some say relation of power...

reconcile to that.... but we do have a recent trend to relate better to one another, Australian model, but also faltering recently.....resignation of Pat Dodson....in New Zealand people concerned with internal reconciliation....

- one aspect also considered is an apology for past wrongs... I learned a useful function of an apology, to offer equal respect and concern by the State to all communities by making a formal statement about the values the government is prepared to uphold and insist upon, for the security of all its citizens... and provision of security is a fundamental role of the State.... so that is important....

- the main feature of the policy was the regret expressed Ministers who are NOT the symbolic head of State power, and that was noted too; and the residential schools policy: \$350 million to be distributed to address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools, including intergenerational impacts....

-Board set up last April and March, with appointees of the federal government and National Aboriginal organization, to form a legal entity, the AHF, enter into a binding agreement on the conditions under which the funds would be disbursed, establish a basic working structure, and appoint a full slate of directors to the Board.

-we have received the funding and it is earning interest, which will finance the administration of the fund;

- we have appointed a full slate of Directors, from Alberta we have

Charles Weaselhead, Carrielynn Lamouch of the Settlements, and Cindy Swanson.

- we have hired an executive director, started on Friday last;

- have gone a substantial way in setting up programme standards and develop a system for receiving, reviewing applications, including an appeals process, and expect that to be completed within the next two weeks;

- required to begin best efforts to commit funds March 31, 1999 within four years, and to disburse within ten years.

- it is a difficult issue, reasonable people can have different views on it;

- important to maintain legitimacy among ostensible beneficiaries and the public, and working to do that...

- none of the funding to affect litigation, for or against....

**PART FOUR THE BROADER CONTEXT OF
ABORIGINAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE
RCAP APPROACH**

- go back to the themes from the public hearings - the importance of self-

esteem and self-confidence as essential to good health ...

GO TO -perhaps helpful to think it applies both to individuals and communities, or 'nations'

P. 14 -how are Aboriginal people seen by Canada??

FRAY P. 16

-seems one role of a Commission like RCAP is to influence the way

Canadians think about Ab. People and issues, and in the longer run to change public decisions about policy;

-in addition to the role of making short term recommendations based on its capacity to do research and share information etc.

-seen by many, including Aboriginal people and opponents of any policy re. Ab as 'racial minorities'..

-RCAP nation: historical, social and political communities.

3 - common legacy and we-feeling; territory and size to make autonomy effective re service to its people....

- not 'races' biologically determined, but rather determined by political decisions, never part of any society, including Ab. Who intermarried with others.... a bogey man raised today by opponents...and false comparisons with South Africa.... basic democratic principles require legitimacy based on the will of the people, including Supreme Court of Canada, and if people want autonomy, OK

-also problem of civil rights movement in USA. As pointed out by Kymlicka, look at American Indians, not African Americans, who came as immigrant individuals; not peoples to be dispossessed in their

homelands... of course peoples in ancient homelands to share a great gene pool; is no reason to oppose....

-and is consistent with international norms of self-determination, which includes self-definition.... UNDD - Geneva - art. 3. Canada agrees

-at the moment State defines some Aboriginal people, and relinquishes only a part in land claims, and controls by resources.... But... Que. Seces Case

-important to assess self-govt. By common standards...

-legitimacy, power resources...

LATER

. the norms behind self-determination and self-government propose that distinct societies entitled to own vision of a happy neighborhood.

-people have distinct societies

-this is the way we do things around here

-will fight for it will retreat to it as natural communities

-can never be eliminated, along with regionalism, contra globalization.

-so accommodate it.... respect it.... difference is not treat the same but equitably...

-the public interest ..

-vision of what a happy neighbourhood looks like... ~~and our leaders~~

And also the judgment of history has something to say about how

Canada thinks about a whole people....it is more difficult to have confidence in yourself if you are identified as one member of a 'despised race...'

something about which I know a little bit about from personal experience.... I will not be self-indulgent and tell you about myself, but maybe I can illustrate

FROM P. 16

B

To p. 16

HERE FROM P. 13

self-esteem - personal & group

what I mean with one or two illustrations.

-the one is about the judgment of history,, I think we should be recognized as having a history that counts, and we are people who matter, and people who matter have a history that matters, compared to what most school books have taught us...

... St Vital and truck drivers, buffalo hunters... perhaps the one about the Sioux and the Metis around the carts on the prairie.....

.. and Giraud's stories as a racist anthropologist much revered by contemporary scholars, but not me... I appreciate his work and its value but do not agree with his assessment of my people and my family....

-primitives... whenever any intellectual effort is required, he gives up
-but real good at drawing and seeing things outside....he had a theory about marginalized races in society.... clearly not as good as himself... well, I worked hard to make my children feel good about themselves.... in bon Michif....

-and today there is a big story about Riel and the way Canada's politicians (but not all - some still have venom in their words...) want to trip over each other to forgive Riel and say he wasn't so bad, and after all, he did what he did because he fought for his people's rights, and we will do all that we can for you today,, short of listening to you when you start talking about your rights....

-it is in many quarters agreed that Riel was not justice was notably absent in Regina when tried, convicted and hanged by a half-jury of six immigrant farmers...people who had upset a way of life and tinkering with the mechanisms of cultural genocide... and starving a lot of people while at

it...and today some want to hear what the grand sons of these immigrants have to say a boout Riel because it makes them feel better. If that is so, good, but I think a Nation is built on a collective remembering. A feeling of solidarity.... and I do not need to hear from them to make me feel better about myself and Riel.

-enough inspiration Dad re Dumont and 90 cartridges... on way by here to Montana.

-let us look after our collective self-esteem... no thanks if you come to do good. And end up doing well.. It must be done on your own.. Spiritual self-sufficiency is what it is all about...

-but individual self-confidence can blunt the hurt of racism.... as I suggested in an article for Can. Teachers Federation many years ago.... racism hurts....

BACK TO P. 13 -

-and group self-confidence can help a group to protect its distinct way of life, which is reflected in how they do things, and relate to people, not on some abstract theory of some idealized notion of a defining antiquity....

And the vision of political autonomy and right to decide on a vision of a happy neighbourhood, cost of a culvert here is giving up a day care spot, and so on. It comes with political autonomy and does not accord equal respect to ab people to say let us give them a one size fits all solution and for the next ten years you get culverts but no day care. To move away from the more sensitive symbols of issue.

PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATION

-we ended up agreeing, as I urged, that the central guiding principle to the making of ab o federal policy ought to be that of PARTICIPATION.

cont
from
p. 14 B

① way we do things - social harmony
② vision of good society - value - right
- decide 'public interest' - retreat

show much better w/ competing info
(3) sep. gov't + sch

-I thought what could they blame me for, well if I say they should be involved in it, then how can they blame me if they messed up their participation?

PART FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

The RCAP chapter on Health and Healing concludes that past policy based on false assumptions about Aboriginal people, have left a legacy of dependency and distrust. Establishing a new relationship based on **mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility** in an era of Aboriginal self-government is the challenge of the 21st century.

Aboriginal people will be **gathering strength** for the task ahead.

This goals of this conference are designed to meet these broad challenges, and for that you deserve congratulations and have my humble best wishes for success.
